

Three Generations in the Library: A Case Study for Lyrasis Leadership Forum

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Introduction

For some time, you have been thinking about the librarians in your library and have been concerned with several issues.

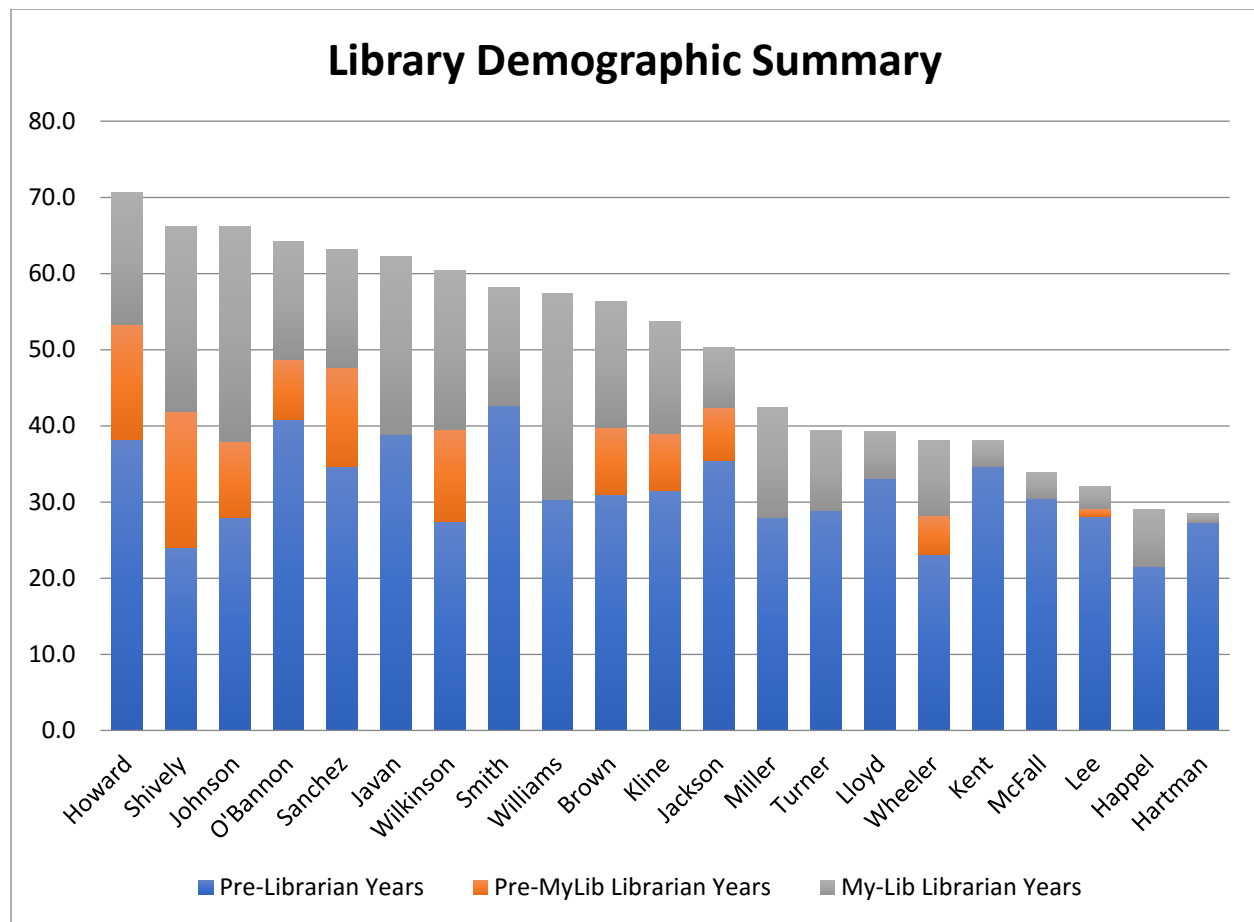
1. You are worried about succession planning. You expect to retire in two years at age 68. In the past, you were not overly concerned, but you have noticed that many libraries like yours are having trouble finding good candidates for director's positions. All of your associate directors and department heads, except for one, are baby boomers and will retire in the next five or six years. You are not sure any of them are ready to be director or that any of them are interested in the job. The mid-career librarians mostly don't seem interested in leadership. You have recently become concerned that the library will not have anyone to step into leadership roles after the current leadership team retires.
2. While you have generally been able to recruit good beginning level librarians, over that past few years the candidate pools have gotten smaller and you have had to offer larger start salaries.
3. The higher starting salaries for new librarians has caused salary compression. Some of the mid-career librarians have begun to grumble.
4. In the past two years three of your beginning librarians have left for more interesting position or higher salaries. In exit interviews, several said that working in your library was fine, but their new position offered more interesting opportunities. Another left when a spouse relocated.
5. You have been unable to increase the diversity of the librarians in your library even though diversity is a campus priority.

In order to get a better understanding of the situation you create the following chart and graph showing the demographics of the librarians in your library. The different colors

indicate the different generations — blue = baby boomers, red = Gen X, and green = millennials.

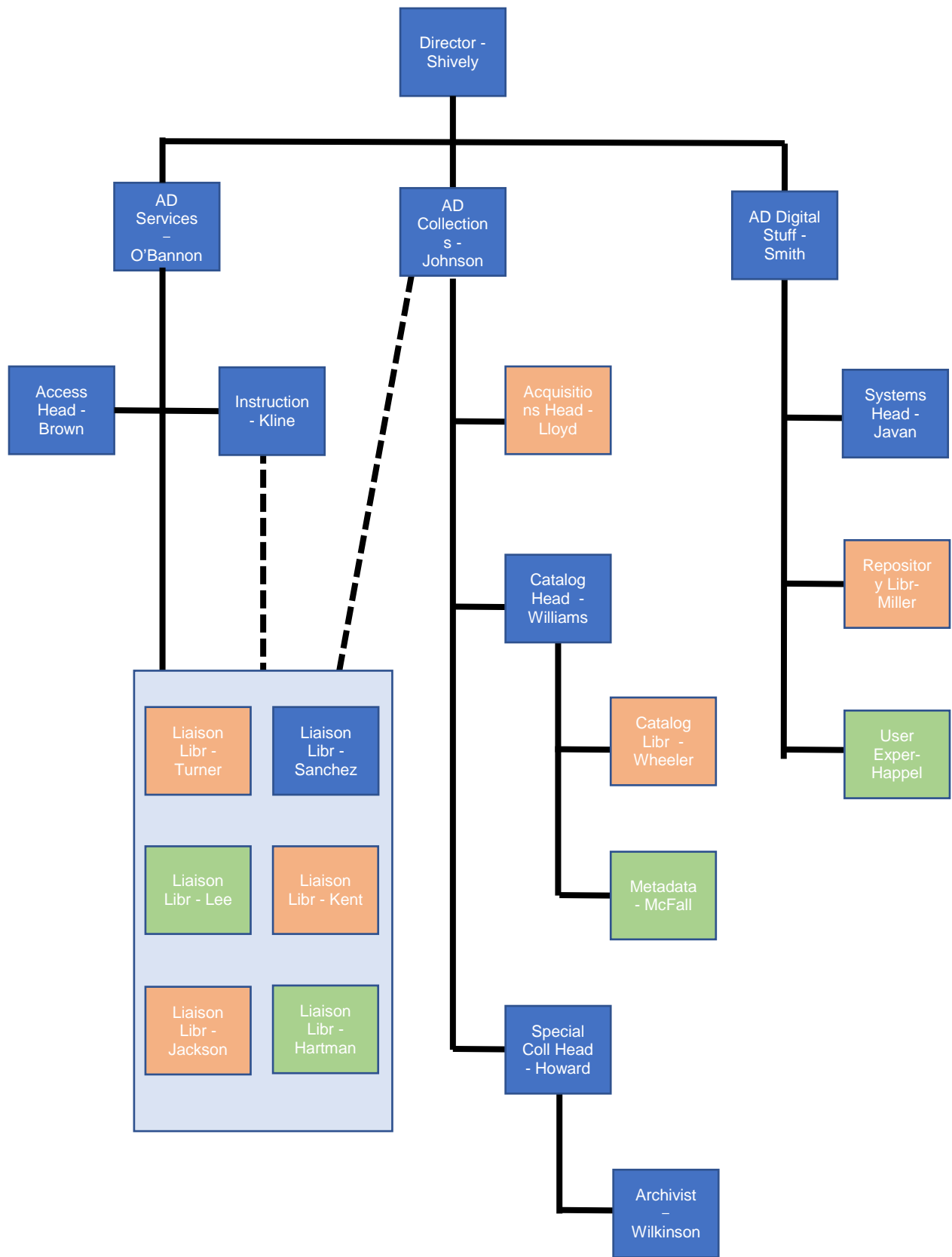
Library Demographic Summary

Last name	Date of Birth	Age	Start Date	Tenured	Rank	Women	Minority	Salary
Howard	03/28/47	70.7	07/01/00	1	Associate	1	0	\$72,500
Shively	09/14/51	66.2	08/16/93	1	Librarian	0	0	\$135,000
Johnson	10/01/51	66.2	09/18/89	1	Associate	0	0	\$85,000
O'Bannon	09/21/53	64.2	06/01/02	1	Associate	1	0	\$87,000
Sanchez	10/21/54	63.1	07/08/02	1	Associate	0	1	\$85,500
Javan	09/12/55	62.2	07/01/94	1	Associate	1	0	\$62,500
Wilkinson	07/15/57	60.4	01/15/97	1	Associate	0	0	\$68,500
Smith	10/21/59	58.1	07/01/02	1	Librarian	1	0	\$82,000
Williams	06/25/60	57.4	10/26/90	1	Associate	0	0	\$73,500
Brown	08/24/61	56.3	06/25/01	1	Associate	0	0	\$59,500
Kline	03/04/64	53.7	03/02/03	1	Associate	1	0	\$62,000
Jackson	08/05/67	50.3	01/15/10	0	Assistant	1	0	\$57,500
Miller	06/26/75	42.4	06/02/03	1	Associate	1	0	\$62,000
Turner	07/27/78	39.3	07/01/07	1	Associate	1	0	\$56,000
Lloyd	09/02/78	39.2	10/01/11	0	Assistant	1	0	\$55,000
Wheeler	11/15/79	38.0	01/13/08	0	Assistant	0	0	\$54,000
Kent	11/25/79	38.0	08/01/14	0	Assistant	1	0	\$53,000
McFall	02/10/84	33.8	08/01/14	0	Assistant	1	1	\$53,000
Lee	12/02/85	32.0	01/06/15	0	Assistant	1	1	\$52,500
Happel	12/01/88	29.0	07/05/10	0	Assistant	0	0	\$54,000
Hartman	06/15/89	28.5	10/13/16	0	Assistant	1	0	\$50,000
Total				13		13	3	
Average		50.0		61.9%		61.9%	14.3%	



Library Organizational Structure

To get another view, you created the following organizational chart coded for the different generations.



National Picture

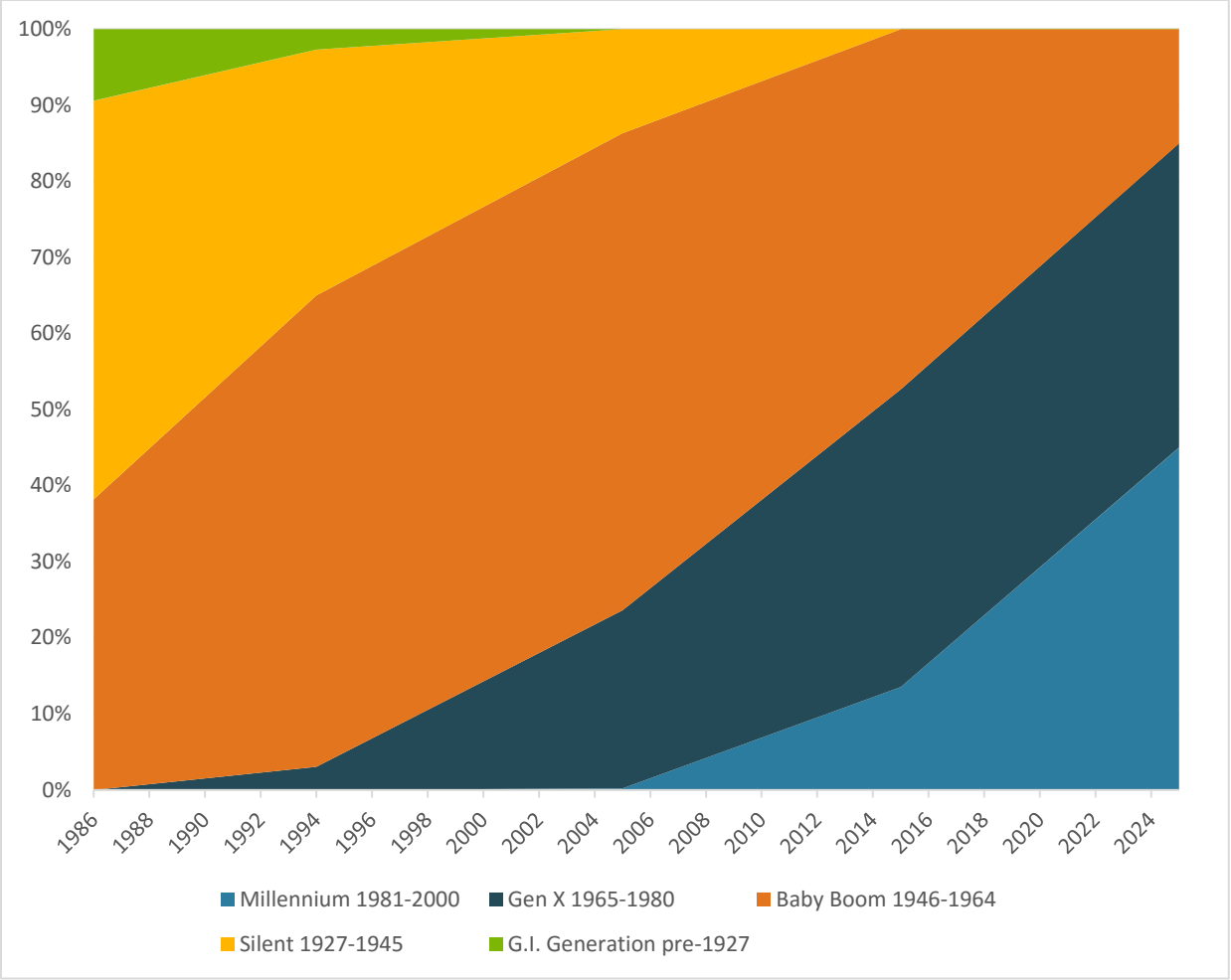
In researching the situation, you come across Stanley Wilder's recent ARL report "Delayed Retirements and the Youth Movement among ARL Library Professionals."¹ You have been worried about the different generations of librarians and how this will impact the profession as a whole and particularly your library. You convert Wilder's data to reflect the different generations and do some quick calculations on the data to project it out a few years. The result is the chart and graph below.

It looks like many academic libraries are in a situation similar to yours. You are particularly concerned with the coming need to attract a large number of younger librarians in the next five to seven years.

Finally, you were review statistics on diversity in academic librarianship and found the last chart below. You wonder what you and your library can do to change this situation.

	1986	1994	2005	2015	2025
Millennium 1981-2000	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	13.5%	45.0%
Gen X 1965-1980	0.0%	3.0%	23.4%	39.1%	40.0%
Baby Boom 1946-1964	38.2%	62.0%	62.7%	47.3%	15.0%
Silent 1927-1945	52.4%	32.3%	13.7%	0.0%	0.0%
G.I. Generation pre-1927	9.4%	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

¹ Stanley Wilder, "Delayed Retirements and the Youth Movement among ARL Library Professionals," Washington, DC: Association of Research Libraries, 2017, <http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/rli-2017-stanley-wilder-article1.pdf>



Ethnic Diversity of Academic Librarians

